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## SERMON CCCCXXI.

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### AN APPEAL TO THE CHURCHES ON THE LOW STATE OF RELIGION.

"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."  
MATT. XXIV. 12.

OUR blessed Savior here speaks of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. He tells his disciples that it will be a time when the world will rise up against them—when all kinds of iniquity will prevail among men, and when the persecutions, temptations, and trials in the Church, would induce many professed Christians to turn away from God, fall into the general current of iniquity, and either entirely apostatize from religion, or become cold and dead in their profession. He gives us a lamentable description of the state of the Church, under the influence of the general corruption of the times; and this description of the Savior is not only applicable to the time of which he speaks in connection with the words of the text, but to many of the subsequent periods in the history of the Church, when she had fallen into the same state. The Church, notwithstanding her high and holy character, and the zeal and activity which she should always manifest in the service of her Master, is liable to fall into a low and languishing state. She is here in a world of sin and wickedness, exposed to temptations, and easily led astray. She is drawn away from God, and brought into conformity with the world. She loses her holy character—her spiritual life, and becomes cold and dead. And when the Church is brought to this low and languishing condition, it becomes the duty of Christians to inquire into it, and see what are the causes which have produced this state of things, so that they may apply the necessary remedies, and save themselves and the Church from the ruin with which they are threatened. Let us then consider this subject—let us consider it seriously and solemnly—let us examine into our lives—let us search our hearts—for it must be acknowledged, that there is cause for deep and thorough heart-searching, in view of the low state of religion

among us. Iniquity is abounding—sin is increasing—it is becoming bolder and waxing stronger every day; and while all this is going on, Christians are becoming weaker, the love of many is waxing cold, the energies of the Church are so feeble, and the influence of Christians so little exerted, that they scarcely produce any effect.

What then are the *causes* of this low state of religion amongst us—this spiritual deadness in the Church, this inefficiency and want of zeal, this backsliding, and falling away of Christians? I have heard some say, we cannot *always* have a revival—there must be a time of coldness. God has withdrawn the influences of his Holy Spirit, and we cannot expect that religion should flourish among us now, as it did when we had these influences. In this way, some people account for the low state of religion—they charge it upon God; they say it is because he has withheld the influences of his Holy Spirit. But is this not charging God foolishly? Is it not charging Him with an unwillingness to give his Holy Spirit? And is this true? Is he not willing to give his Holy Spirit, and *more willing to give than we are to ask it*? God is always ready and willing to pour out his Holy Spirit, and the low state of religion is not owing to any indisposition on his part to grant that influence which is necessary to support and preserve spiritual religion in the heart. It is owing to the indisposition of Christians to receive that spiritual and divine influence which God is ready to impart to them. *They do not ask for it.* They do not pray for it as they ought. They do not feel the necessity and importance of such an influence. They are not in a situation to receive it, and consequently they cannot enjoy it. Religion languishes and dies in their hearts. God is always ready to work, but he works by *means*. It is his will and design, that his people should work with him—that they should pray, and labor, and render sacrifices, that his work may go on. And when the professed people of God are unwilling to work in this way, when they grow weary and faint, and turn away from the Lord unto their idols, when they restrain prayer, when they leave the work which the Lord has given them to do in his vineyard, and follow after the world and its vanities, and forbidden pleasures, the work of the Lord will cease. The windows of heaven will be shut up, and the Holy Spirit will no longer descend, to refresh, and enliven, and animate the hearts of Christians. They will lose their interest in religion, and they will pine away and die in their sins. In this way God withholds his Holy Spirit, and suffers religion to decline in the hearts of his professing people. He suffers them to go on in their sins, and pursue their own evil ways. In this way an entire church is sometimes given up to the spirit of delusion. Whole congregations and communities are ready to perish under this awful judgment of God, for their sins; and yet they do not seem to be sensible of their danger. O that

God might open the eyes of his backslidden people, and show them wherein they have sinned against him!

Another cause of the low state of religion in the Church, is the *carelessness of so many professing Christians in reading the Bible, and meditating on divine truth.* Go into many of our Christian families, and you will find the tables covered with books and pamphlets, and works of fancy, designed for the entertainment of a certain class of readers, without any regard to their religious improvement. These books are eagerly sought after, read in the family, and provided for the entertainment of visitors, when the Bible is neglected, and its sacred truths kept out of view. The Bible is the great means which God has given for preserving and promoting spiritual religion in families, and in the Church. For this purpose, it should occupy the chief place in every family. It should be faithfully read and studied every day. Christ says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they testify of me." The Bereans were commended, because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so;" therefore many of them believed. And this is every Christian's duty. He must search the Scriptures—he must read his Bible every day; read it seriously, prayerfully, so that he may derive instruction and benefit from it. If he neglects this, he neglects the very means which God has given him for his improvement in religion. If he neglects his Bible, he will soon lose his interest in religion. He cannot go forward in the work. The Psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" and if we have not this lamp and this light, we shall soon be left in the dark, and lose our way. And it is by not paying sufficient attention to this light, that so many professing Christians lose their way. It is this that causes so many to stumble and fall in the Church; and it is in consequence of this, that the Church has so often reason to mourn over the low state of religion—the errors and offences—the wanderings and backslidings of so many of her members.

When people do not *read* the word of God, they have no desire to hear it *preached*. They neglect the public worship of God in the sanctuary, absent themselves from the ordinances, and feel no interest in the religious meetings of their brethren, for their spiritual improvement. This is usually the case with persons who neglect the Scriptures and the worship of God at home. They feel no interest in the public worship of God, and when they attend religious meetings, it seems more from constraint than from a willingness to be benefited and improved. This is also a cause of a low state of religion in many of our churches.

The next cause of the low state of religion among us, which I would mention, is the *want of brotherly faithfulness in members of the Church towards each other.* Christians should take a deep interest in each other's spiritual welfare. They are bound toge-

ther by the most sacred ties. They should love each other as brethren, as members of the same spiritual family. They should always be united in the closest harmony and friendship; and when differences occur among them, they should immediately seek to become reconciled upon the principles laid down in the Gospel of Christ, Matt. xviii. 15-17. They should never indulge in any unkind and bitter feeling. They should never think of publishing each other's faults among men, or resorting to the world for the settlement of their difficulties; 1 Cor. vi. 1-7. For, whenever they do so, they go out of the way prescribed in the Gospel; they violate the law and commandment of Christ, and they bring dishonor on the Christian profession. All differences among Christians should be settled upon Christian principles; upon the principles asserted by the Apostle, that the saints shall judge the world; that Christians are the most proper persons to judge between their brethren, and that we should rather suffer wrong, than to contend before the world, and cause the wicked to blaspheme. This is the *spirit* in which all differences among Christians should be settled; and it is because there are so many professing Christians who are unwilling to be governed and directed by this spirit—so prone to indulge their selfish feelings—so unwilling to receive Christian counsel and advice, and so determined to have their own way, that religion suffers, and the cause of God languishes in so many Christian communities. Christians should feel such a deep interest in each other's welfare, they should have such a love and regard for each other, as faithfully to observe each other's conduct; and when they see anything that is wrong, anything hurtful to the soul of an individual, or injurious to the cause of religion, they should admonish one another, for God has commanded the Christian, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." We should honestly and faithfully admonish and reprove one another for the errors and offences which we commit; and it is the want of this faithfulness among professing Christians, this want of interest in the welfare of our brethren, this proneness to selfishness, an unforgiving disposition and worldly temper in the Church, which has done more injury to religion than all other causes combined.

Such are the causes of the low state of religion. These causes exist among us. We see their sad effects, and feel their deleterious influence. We see how iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxing cold: how the ways of Zion mourn, and how few come to her solemn feasts. How Christians forsake the assembling of themselves together, and how they are neglecting their Christian duties, falling from their steadfastness, and giving themselves away to a worldly spirit. We see how the cause of God is languishing in our midst—how religion is diminishing in our own hearts, how we are carried away by the spirit of the times. The reason is, we do not pray as Christians *ought* to pray, especially at such a time as this. We do not call upon the name



of the Lord with that earnestness and perseverance which are required. We do not agonize in prayer; we do not lay hold of the horns of the altar, and cry mightily to God, and wrestle with him, as his servants did, who prevailed. We do not read the Scriptures, and hear the word of God, and love and meditate upon it, as we ought to do. We are not faithful enough to each other as Christian brethren. We fall into sin, and backslide, and bring reproach upon the cause of Christ; and we suffer each other to go on, without laboring with each other and admonishing and reproving one another, as it is our solemn duty to do. And now, in view of these causes, how ought we to feel, and what ought we to do? I answer, we feel our state of sin, and we ought to feel deeply humbled.

1. In view of the low state of religion among us, and the causes which led to it, we ought to feel deeply humbled. It is not a light matter, which should pass over with a confession of sin, such as we are accustomed to make, and then think we have done all we can do, and is our duty to do. No, we have arrived at a crisis in the Church which should awaken deep feeling in every heart; we have turned away from God; we have grievously backslidden; we have fallen into open sins, which have brought dishonor on religion, opened the mouths of gainsayers, and made us a reproach and by-word before the world. And now God is ready to come out in judgment against us. He is already chastening us with his sore displeasure. It would almost seem that his Spirit had departed from us, and that he had given us up as a prey to the enemy. Difficulties and trials are coming upon us from every quarter, and roots of bitterness are springing up to trouble us in every direction; and if the Lord do not stretch forth His hand and save us, we must eventually perish. Such is our state; O that we might all realize it, O that every member of the church might see and feel the awful crisis we have reached! We would then feel like Nehemiah, when he said, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire." Like Esther, the queen, when she fasted and prayed for the deliverance of her people, and entered into the presence of the king and sought relief. Like the priests and the ministers of God who wept between the porch and the altar, and cried, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." Such should be our emotions and feelings, in view of the present state of religion among us. And the reason why we do not experience these emotions and feelings, is, that we live so blinded by sin that we cannot see our danger. And is it not to be feared that some of us are past all feeling, that we have hearts like the nether millstone, that our eyes are closed, that we cannot see, and that God has sent us strong delusions, that we might go on and perish as a judicial affliction upon us for our sins?

2. Christians should unite in faithful and judicious efforts for the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit. They should come

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Such are the causes of the low state of religion. These causes exist among us. We see their sad effects, and feel their deleterious influence. We see how iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxing cold: how the ways of Zion mourn, and how few come to her solemn feasts. How Christians forsake the assembling of themselves together, and how they are neglecting their Christian duties, falling from their steadfastness, and giving themselves away to a worldly spirit. We see how the cause of God is languishing in our midst—how religion is diminishing in our own hearts, how we are carried away by the spirit of the times. The reason is, we do not pray as Christians *ought* to pray, especially at such a time as this. We do not call upon the name

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together, and consider the low state of religion; they should inquire into the causes, and make it a subject of special prayer, that they might be awakened to a just sense of their duties and responsibilities in the matter; they should feel that they are the cause of the spiritual deadness in the Church, of the neglect, and indifference, and contempt, with which religion is treated around them. They should feel that they are to blame in this matter, and that upon them rests the responsibility of continuing in this awful and perilous condition. Such a feeling in the Church usually leads to a blessed result: it brings down the Holy Spirit; and we cannot hope for the descent of the Holy Spirit until the Church begins to *wake up* and feel the weight of her responsibilities and duties. This is the great thing now needed among professing Christians. They must look at the state of religion; they must see how deplorable it is; they must feel to mourn over it; and then they must look into their own hearts, and see how, by their neglect of Christian duties, their worldly conformity, their backslidings and sins, they have contributed to this state, and how very guilty they are in the sight of God. They must confess their sins, and humble themselves before God, and repent in dust and ashes. They must call upon the Lord; pray for the Holy Spirit, and God will yet have mercy on them, and hearken to their cry, and send them relief.

3. Christians, in view of the low state of religion, should commence the work of reformation in their own families. We are too apt to look for great things *abroad*, when we should look for them *at home*. If we wish to have a revival in the Church, we must begin in the family. If there are any obstacles in our families, or in our own hearts, they must first be removed before we can hope to see a work of grace commence in our midst. We must *prepare* our families and our own hearts, and then we shall see it go on: and if every Christian did so, if he opened the way for the Holy Spirit in his family and his heart, how soon we would have a revival of religion. This is what hindered the Holy Spirit from coming in our midst; this prevents revivals of religion. We pray for them in the Church; we look for them abroad; but we do not pray—we do not look for them in our families and in our own hearts; and until we begin here, we cannot hope that God will hear our prayers and prosper our labors.

4. Christians should pray for a revival of religion, as the most necessary and important matter that can possibly engage their attention. They should pray, with one accord, with united hearts; they should assemble themselves together for this purpose; they should lay aside every other business, and attend to this; they should feel that this is the first and most necessary business to be attended to, and that the time spent in this business is most pleasing to God and profitable to their souls. They should realize, without a revival of religion, the times are constantly growing worse—iniquity is abounding—the love of Christians is



waxing colder—sinners are growing bolder in sin—God's wrath is waxing hotter against us, and the danger is constantly increasing that we shall all be consumed by that wrath. Such is our situation, and such the crisis to which we have arrived, that the only thing that can save the Church, and the country, and our families, from impending destruction, is a *revival of religion*. God is our only refuge from the storm that is ready to burst upon us. To Him let us flee. He alone, by His Almighty arm, and the influence of His spirit, can save us. Then let us ask this influence. Let us ask God to pour out His Holy Spirit upon our Churches, and our families, and our hearts. Let us pray that He may revive and refresh us by a shower of His grace. This is what we need, a revival of religion; and we need the *spirit of prayer to obtain it*. We need the spirit of the Patriarch who wrestled with God, and said, "I cannot let thee go, except thou give me a blessing." We need the spirit of the Prophet who intreated for Zion, and said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

God alone can revive us, and He will revive us if we do our duty, and use the means He has appointed for this purpose. Though we have deserved that He should leave us to perish in our sins, though He is a Sovereign, and under no obligations to save us, even if we should use the means, yet He hath promised that He will have mercy upon us if we turn from our sins with penitent and broken hearts. He hath said in His word, "Return unto me, ye backsliding children, and I will heal all your backslidings." What a kind invitation! What a precious promise! O, let us accept this invitation. Let us lay hold of this promise, and let us say, "Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God."

God can bring deliverance to His people. He can raise His Church out of her low state; He can turn the waste and desolate places into blooming fields; He can bring order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and can even so control and overrule sin and wickedness, when they have arrived at their highest pitch, so as to promote His purposes and glory. All this the Lord can do. But for this, He will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. This is the condition. If we want the power of God to be manifested in our deliverance and salvation, and the accomplishment of His blessed purposes, we must ask for it. O, then, let us ask for a manifestation of His power and grace in our midst. Let us ask for the Holy Spirit with humble, believing, persevering prayer, and then we may expect a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

even the most faithful and devoted Christians are very liable to fall into error and to be misled by the spirit of the Holy Ghost, they are liable to

## SERMON CCCCXXII

BY G. A. LINTNER, D. D.

OF SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S NEED OF A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."—PSALM LI, 12, 13.

THE Psalmist uttered these words under deep conviction of sin. He had grievously backslidden—he had committed a gross act of wickedness, for which he was rebuked by the Prophet, and he felt that he deserved the rebuke. He confessed his sin, and said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

David, in his fallen and guilty state, felt that he needed the Holy Spirit. He knew that he had sinned against God, and that for this sin he deserved to be cast out from his presence forever. But still he was anxious to return, and he knew that he could not return without the Holy Spirit. He therefore prayed for the Spirit. He asked God to pour out the Holy Spirit into his heart, that he might be delivered from his sins, and restored to the divine favor. He felt not only for himself, but also for others, and especially for those whom he had misled and injured by his wicked example. He had brought reproach upon religion—he had opened the mouths of gainsayers, and strengthened and encouraged sinners in their wicked ways. And now, he felt a desire, not only, that he himself might be restored, but that he might be made an instrument of reclaiming others, who were perishing in sin. "Restore unto me the joy," &c.

The prayer of the Psalmist shows an awakened conscience, after having fallen into sin, and an earnest desire for the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit to recover from this state. It shows also, how easily Christians may be led away by the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the power of the adversary, and that when they thus stumble and fall, they need the Holy Spirit not only to raise up themselves, but also to do something for others. Christians need a revival of religion in their own hearts, to prepare them to labor for the salvation of perishing sinners. To this subject I shall now invite your attention. I shall endeavor to show,

I. What is meant by a revival of religion in the hearts of Christians—and

II. How such a revival prepares them to labor for the salvation of the impenitent.

I. Christians are very liable to fall into sin—even after they have been enlightened by the grace of God, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, they are liable to

fall away. Their hearts are so deceitful, and they are so much under the influence of the world, and its evil temptations, that they are easily led astray, and often, before they are aware of it themselves, they have wandered so far from God, that they have lost their interest in religion, and care but little for their souls. This is a very dangerous state for Christians to be in. In this state they are in danger of perishing, as much as the unconverted and impenitent; and they must be awakened from this state, or they will perish—and they can only be awakened by the Holy Spirit. They need the Holy Spirit to rouse them from their lethargy, and show them their true condition—how guilty and wretched they are, how they are dishonoring God, injuring religion, and destroying their own souls; and there are times when Christians see this. When the Holy Spirit enters their hearts, and convinces them of sin—shows them how they have wandered from God, conformed to the world, and yielded to temptation, and neglected their Christian duties—the duties of prayer and meditation, and self-examination; the duties of reading the Scriptures, and worshipping God in their families, and in their closets: and when Christians see and feel this, their hearts will be broken, they will mourn over their sins, and have a desire to return unto God. They will begin to pray, and say with David, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit;" and when their consciences are thus awakened, they will not only feel for themselves, but they will become deeply interested in the salvation of others. They will be ready to labor, and make sacrifices for the salvation of sinners; they will ask for God's Holy Spirit, that they may teach transgressors his way, and that sinners may be converted to Him; they will become so absorbed in religion, and so entirely taken up with God and his service, that they desire to live only for him—their greatest delight, their daily meat and drink, will be to do His will. Earthly objects pass away from the mind, the soul is longing after communion with God—the heart is filled with the spirit of devotion, and there is an anxious desire to glorify God, and to labor for the salvation of the lost and perishing.

When such a spirit takes possession of the heart, religion is no longer a burthen. It becomes easy for Christians to do their duty. They consider it a privilege to serve God—a privilege to pray. It is easy to converse with a neighbor on the subject of religion, and speak with sinners, and try to persuade them to forsake their sins and turn to God. This is what we call a revival of religion in the hearts of Christians; and when we see such a spirit manifested among Christians, we see the power and influence of true religion exemplified, and sinners will be converted to God. When Christians feel the importance of the work in which they profess to be engaged; when they come up to the standard of the Gospel, and act under a full sense of their religious duties and obligations, it will have an effect. Sinners, with all their errors, and prejudices, and enmity against God in their hearts, will see the light, and feel

the power of such a religion, and they will be constrained, almost irresistibly, to yield themselves up to its influence. They cannot withstand its appeals to their consciences and hearts. They must, and will, be persuaded to turn from their evil ways, and seek an interest in the Savior—and this leads me to consider—

II. How a revival of religion in the hearts of Christians prepares them to labor effectually for the salvation of the impenitent.

1. When Christians are revived in their hearts by the influences of the Holy Spirit, they have clearer views and stronger impressions of divine truth. This is one reason why they are prepared to labor more effectually for the salvation of souls. Truth is always powerful, and wherever it is seen in its true light, and felt in its divine power, it has an awakening influence. It raises the mind, and excites the feelings, and stimulates to action. But the truth is sometimes hidden even from Christians. They do not always see it in the light they ought to see it, nor feel its force as they should feel it. When they become cold, and lukewarm, they have very indistinct, and often very mistaken notions of truth and religion. They have wrong and imperfect views of sin—they do not see their duty clearly; they do not feel the power of religion in their hearts as they ought, and consequently, they grow weary and faint, and cold, and careless. But let the Holy Spirit be poured into their hearts—let the Great Teacher, the Spirit of Truth, enter into their minds, with the light of heaven, the light of revealed truth, and they will see how they have been deceiving themselves with wrong views, and false hopes in religion; how they have erred from the truth, and wandered from God, given themselves up to the evil influences to which they were exposed. They will be convinced of their error, and be willing to confess their sin. They will see their faults, and be ready to acknowledge them. The veil will be taken from their eyes, and they will now have a clear perception of the truth. They will now see that they have offended against God, that they have injured their own souls. They will see their true state and condition as wanderers from God and the fold of Christ, and they will be anxious to return with a broken heart—a heart enlightened by divine truth and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and ready to be entirely devoted and consecrated to God.

Such are the views and feelings of professing Christians, when they are awakened from sin, and the Word of God is revived in their hearts. They are brought under the influence of the spirit of truth, and under this influence, they see not only their own sad condition, but they see the state of others who are living without God and without hope in the world. They have received into their hearts the light of truth, and so strong is this light, and so deep the impression it has produced, that they are willing to labor, and suffer, and render sacrifices for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. This is an invariable result of a revival of religion in the hearts of Christians; they have a clearer discovery of the



truth—feel its impressions more deeply in their hearts, and are more willing to yield themselves up to its influence.

2. *When Christians are revived in their hearts by the influence of the Holy Spirit, they enter more into the spirit of prayer.*—When Christians become cold and lukewarm, they lose this Spirit. When they feel not much concerned for their own souls, they care but little for the souls of others; consequently, they have no desire to pray; and even if they attempt to pray, they will not have the right spirit. You can always tell from the prayer of a Christian how he feels affected, what the state of his heart is, and how much he is interested in religion and in the service of God. Men will pray just as they feel;—if the fire of love and devotion burns feebly on the altar of their hearts, they will emit but little light and heat to warm and enliven those around them; their prayers will be cold and destitute of spiritual life; but if the heart be touched by the Holy Spirit, it will be filled with the spirit of prayer, the spirit of grace and supplication; there will be deep feeling, and earnest entreaty, and holy importunity; there will be a spirit something like the spirit of the patriarch, when he said, "Except thou bless me, I will not let thee go." There will be a pouring out of the heart, an intense desire for the salvation of souls. There will be no such thing as becoming weary and faint. There will be constant knocking at the door, a faithful claiming of the promises, and a laying hold of the hope that is set before us in the Gospel. And when Christians pray with such a spirit, they will feel to labor also for the salvation of sinners; they will not only ask God to convert sinners, but they will seek also that they may be converted through their instrumentality. After they have prayed for the impenitent, they will go to them, and talk with them, and labor with them, and endeavor to produce an impression which will lead them to Christ, and bring them into the ark of his salvation. A Christian who prays only for the salvation of sinners, without ever conversing with them on the subject of religion, cannot have much of the Spirit's influence. His heart is not right; he has not the spirit of prayer; and he might as well not pray at all, as to pray that the impenitent might be converted to God, while he is unwilling to use any exertion, and become instrumental in their conversion. Wherever the Holy Spirit is poured out, you will find the spirit of prayer, a spirit of love, a spirit that always manifests itself in faithful and persevering labors for the perishing.

3. *When Christians are revived in their hearts by the influence of the Holy Ghost, they are induced to make special efforts for the salvation of sinners.* Like the Psalmist in the text, they become deeply concerned for the souls of the impenitent that are perishing around them; they are anxious to teach transgressors the way, and use every exertion in their power that sinners may repent of their sins and give their hearts to God. They feel constrained, by the love of Christ and the love of souls, to exhort, and admonish, and rebuke sinners, with all patience, and meekness, and long suffer-

ing, that they may forsake their sins, and become reconciled to God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. This is the effect of the Spirit's influence in the hearts of Christians. It warms the heart, kindles the fire of love, and there is a burning zeal for the salvation of souls. It makes men active in the service of Christ, willing to undergo any labor, or render any sacrifice that may win souls to Christ. It is this spirit working in the hearts of Christians, that removes mountains. It produces wonderful effects; it sometimes even excites the astonishment of the world; it goes from individuals into families, and spreads from house to house, and from family to family, until it has passed through the whole community, and produced an entire change in the character, habits, feelings, and dispositions of the people. When Christians exercise such an influence, and exhibit such an example, they show the power of true religion; they are then indeed like a city set on a hill; their light shines—it shines with a clear and holy brilliancy, and those that wander in darkness see it. They see the holy walk and conversation of Christians, their devotedness to God, their love and affection for each other, their faithful and disinterested labors for the salvation of sinners; they see their love for souls, their anxiety to save them; and they hear their tender entreaties, the strong and affectionate appeals. Sinners see and hear this, and they begin to feel, their hearts are affected, and they are ready to yield to an influence which they cannot longer resist. They can resist almost every other power which can be brought to bear upon them; but they cannot resist the power of love, the power of sympathy, the power of prayer, and effort to do them good. When sinners are convinced in their hearts that Christians really love them, and are laboring to do them good, they will yield to their entreaties, and repent, and turn to God, and seek the Savior. Thousands have been converted in this way. Multitudes that have been so hardened in sin as almost to be given up for lost, have been reclaimed by the faithful and persevering labors and prayers of Christians. God employs his people as instruments for the conversion of sinners. And when the people of God have been awake, when the Holy Spirit has moved upon their hearts, there has been a stir among sinners; they have felt the power of truth and the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the cry has gone forth, as in the days of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?"

We learn from this subject—

I. *That we cannot expect to see sinners converted as long as Christians are asleep in their sins.* God, it is true, sometimes converts sinners without the instrumentality of Christians. He brings sinners to repentance, and leads them into the ark of Christ's salvation, when Christians are standing in the way. He sometimes even reverses the order of spiritual influences, by which he usually leads men to repentance. He first converts sinners, and then, through their instrumentality, works on the hearts of professing

Christians, instead of employing Christians as instruments to operate on sinners. Still the church is the great instrument in the hands of God of saving souls. For this purpose, God has furnished his church with the ministry, and the ordinances, and spiritual influences, and great moral power. And these powers and influences must be exercised before we can expect to see sinners converted. Christians must wake out of sleep, they must take hold of the work and be active in the service of Christ, or we need not expect that much impression will be produced on those who are hardening their hearts in sin. If Christians will return from their wanderings, and confess their sins, and humble themselves before God, and pray, and consecrate themselves anew to the work, we shall soon see the effect; the Holy Spirit will come down and bless their efforts, and sinners will be converted.

Then let Christians awake. They are sleeping under an awful responsibility, under a tremendous load of guilt. Sinners are perishing around, and stumbling over them into the bottomless pit. O, then, let the Church rouse from her slumbers; let Christians call upon the Lord, that he may pour out his Holy Spirit into their hearts, that they may see their own state, and feel for those who are perishing in consequence of their indifference, and want of feeling, and neglect of duty. Let every Christian awake; let every parent who has children out of the ark of safety, awake, lest his children die in their sins, and their blood be required at his hands; let every head of a family awake, lest the unconverted members of his own household rise up in the day of judgment and say, "You were a professor of religion; I looked to you for instruction and example; but you neglected your duty, you cared not for my soul, and you suffered me to perish when you might have saved me." Let every Christian who has impenitent friends, awake, and labor with renewed diligence, that the souls of those friends which are so precious, and every moment ready to perish, may not be lost for ever.

2. We see that nothing is so much needed, in the present state of the Church, as the influence of the Holy Spirit. We often speak of the low state of religion, and seem to feel that something is necessary to be done, to rouse Christians from their lethargy, and elevate the standard of religion in the Church. We use means, and resort to many expedients, to interest the minds of the people in religion, and in the worship of God; we build churches, engage ministers, and improve our houses of worship, and in every way seek to accommodate the people, with a view of drawing out large congregations; but all this alone will not do. It will not bring out the people as long as they have no hearts to worship God. We need something more than beautiful churches, and eloquent preachers, to produce a right impression on the minds of the people. We need the Holy Spirit to engage their hearts in the worship of God. We need the influences of the Spirit to wake up the Church, to excite an interest in the minds of the people, bring them

out to church, assemble them in the prayer meeting, and inspire them with feelings of devotion. The Holy Spirit only can awaken Christians; He only can convert sinners, give power and efficacy to his word, destroy the works of Satan, and build up the kingdom of Christ. And we must ask the Holy Spirit to do these things for us. Christians must pray for the Holy Spirit, that they may be awakened, that they may be convinced of their sins, be induced to humble themselves before God, and repent; for this is what they need,—they need the influence of the Spirit to show them their sins, and reclaim them from their wanderings: pardon their sins, take away their guilt, and restore them to the favor of God and the joys of his salvation.

Let us pray for this influence. Let us pray with a deep sense of our depravity and wickedness with an humble confession of our sins, with an meek and fervent spirit, with hearts full of love and compassion, yearning over sinners who are destroying themselves. Let us pray earnestly and perseveringly; and while we pray, let us look up to God, through faith, for the accomplishment of our desires, and God will hearken to the voice of our supplication. He will pour out His Holy Spirit, restore unto us the joys of His salvation, and we shall "teach transgressors His way, and sinners shall be converted to Him."



## SERMON CCCCXXIII.

BY REV. WILLIAM T. SAVAGE,

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## CHRISTIAN TOLERANCE.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—MATT. VII. 12.

The discipline of life is various, and under the Providence of God adjusted to the state and liabilities of our common nature. We are surrounded by circumstances that constantly act upon us as *tests and trials of our characters*, the great object of which is to train and educate the spirit to a higher faith in God, to nobler effort, and to a full and consummate happiness. Yet our tendencies are downward, our views are naturally partial, our wills perverse, and our conduct opposed to the law of right. Conscience, which commands us to resist whatever would debase, and to pursue those things which are above, is easily overcome.

In the liability of man to yield to his downward tendencies, and to extinguish, by sinful indulgence, the inner light of the soul, God has been pleased, in order that man might not wander in eternal darkness, to give an external light—the Holy Bible—by which the inner light is to be rekindled, and man is again to be illumined by the knowledge of the truth. An illustration of these remarks you may find in the text. There is no rule of duty more fully prescribed by reason and conscience than the command, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And yet so great is our liability to pervert this law, written on the heart, that God has placed it conspicuously in the statute book of His moral kingdom, adding, as an expression of its deep import and binding authority, "this is the law and the prophets."

The signification of the text is this: In your treatment of others, place yourself in their situation, and as in their circumstances you would wish them to do to you, even so do to them.

If this rule, authoritatively enjoined by the conscience of every one, and announced by the Lord Jesus, held full sway over the hearts and conduct of men, O how changed would be the face of the community! Social trials and sorrows would fly away, like the mist before the morning's sun, and heaven's own loveliness would rest upon the bosom of society.

In bringing to your attention the truth uttered by our Savior in the text, my purpose is not to consider it as furnishing a rule for the general conduct of man, but to make an application of it to

one particular aspect or condition of social life—to consider it as inculcating the duty of *Christian tolerance*. Let us

I. Inquire for the true idea of Christian tolerance, and

II. Consider some reasons for the exercise of this virtue.

In endeavoring, then, to gain a true idea of Christian tolerance, the remark, I apprehend, will be found true, that it consists in a *forbearing and kind treatment of the persons and the motives of those of our fellow-beings with whom we feel obliged to differ*.

If men thought, felt, and acted *alike* on all subjects, the world would indeed be more harmonious than at present; but there would be no room for tolerance, and we are far from thinking that mankind would be improved by such a change. It would take away the wind from the atmosphere, the tide from the ocean, the life and energy from all nature. Human society would be breathless, currentless, and inanimate. The soul would slumber, and a death-like palsy would seize upon the human powers. We have good reason, then, to be content with the present constitution of things, and even to rejoice that each mind is left to think and feel, to decide and act for itself. This imparts animation and a purifying energy to the whole mass of human society. But suppose a community of men, with minds diversely constituted, and of various endowments and degrees of knowledge, each arriving at different conclusions, and each bent upon forcing his views upon the others, what would be the result? The jarring sound of Milton's infernal doors, grating harsh thunder, would present no unapt emblem of the spirit of their abode. Universal discord, strife and warfare, must follow. And how will you send peace into that community? Let all unite upon the things in which they are agreed, and let them tolerate one another for the rest. Each has a perfect right (as between man and man) to his own opinions and his own course of conduct, provided he do not infringe upon the rights of others. Let each treat the others in such a way, as in an exchange of circumstances, he would wish them to treat him. This will bring harmony, and a noble spirit of humanity, and Christian forbearance, into that community, and, at the same time, there will remain the spirit of activity and mutual improvement.

In this case, it will be found that each has tolerated the *persons* of the others. There may have been qualities of repugnance and dislike, but each has treated the others in a *kind and forbearing* manner.

The highest point of resemblance in men lies in their common humanity. They are alike an emanation from God. His image is enstamped upon their intellectual and moral nature. They are alike partakers of immortality, and alike they have untold interests at stake, which are to be secured or lost by their conduct in this life. That such points of concord, combining the elements of the exalted and the infinite, should be merged in any little personal pique, or that they should be permitted to lie in the background, and the conduct suffered to be controlled by the antipathies and re-

sentments that disfigure common life, we pronounce to be a high manifestation of the spirit of intolerance. It is neither Christian, humane, nor kind. Tolerance regards with sympathy the *immortal man*, and exercises forbearance and pity for his faults. This spirit, while it ennobles him that possesses it, cannot fail to tranquilize and bless all whom it may reach.

True toleration will be found to include also kind treatment of the *motives* of others. A good motive should be ascribed to the conduct of every individual when possible, and due credit should be given therefor. This treatment, which we rightfully expect from others, we should accord unto them. "Every one shall be held innocent in the eye of the law until he be proved guilty," is a maxim of common justice. And we sometimes hear it announced from the bench, and at the bar, "It were better that ninety-nine guilty persons go unpunished than that one innocent man suffer." These sentiments, under the law of charity, should have a full application to the *motives* of men. No motive should be pronounced unworthy until it be proved to be so. And it were better to allow ninety-nine that are impure or equivocal to escape condemnation, than consign to the post of dishonor one that is worthy and pure. Such are the dictates of justice, Christian charity, and tolerance.

But some one of you, perhaps, is ready to ask, "Are there not some persons so vicious and debased that *nothing* worthy in motive or deed is to be expected of them? And in their case, may we not properly set it down that no good thing can come out of Nazareth?" Whether there are such men, my brother, as those respecting whom you inquire, I do not know. It is to be hoped there are not. The highest motive is supreme love to God. There are those, doubtless, who are not influenced by this motive. Nazareth is reputed to have been a very vile place, yet from it proceeded the Savior of the world. Can you tell me, my brother, whether unto those hearts which you deem so graceless and unpromising, some celestial visitant hath not approached and called forth unwonted desires and aspirations therein? Can you tell me that the act which, *from past analogies*, you judge to be bad, is not the first outward manifestation of a new life within and that its motive is not the inspiration of the spirit of Jesus him, self? If you cannot discern the spirit of your brother with the eye of the Omniscient, and answer these questions in the negative, then let charity have its perfect work. Despite of past character, let the motive be unto you a good one, and think more kindly of your brother. Can you not attain unto this? Then you have not attained unto the clear sunshine of Christian tolerance. You have yet to struggle up to this region of true dignity and spiritual repose.

But it is very important here to set up a way-mark, to deter my hearers from wandering on to dangerous ground that lies in this vicinity.

I have said that Christian tolerance consists in a kind and forbearing treatment of *the persons* and *motives* of those with whom we feel obliged to differ. The remark I now make, by way of guarding against error, is, that tolerance does not require the mild and forbearing treatment of *false principles* and *opinions*. These, on the contrary, are, in every proper way, to be resisted. If possible, they are to be driven from the earth and utterly extirpated. They are vipers, of exceedingly sharp and venomous fangs, coiled up in the soul, where they nestle and grow, and when sufficiently large and mature, they dart their poison into the most vital part, and hurry the wretched victim to a dreadful end. Endangered ourselves, by such enemies, we should wish our friends to treat them with no forbearance, for tenderness to them is ruin to us. In like manner, we should treat such foes with no forbearance in others, but should endeavor, with all our power, to destroy them. While we treat with kindest and most humane regard *the man* that espouses error, and accord unto him, as far as possible, *worthy motives*, let us *abhor that error* with the whole force of our moral aversion, and by our allegiance to the truth and our love for him, endeavor to extirpate it from his mind.

Thus, it will be seen, that we do not sympathize with the lax view that makes *sincerity* the test of *religious faith*, and that can tolerate any system of error, provided it be honestly held. To regard truth and error as indifferent in the sight of God, is to fasten a libel upon His character. To hold them as indifferent ourselves, is to put an indignity upon our own souls. We make no pretension to such liberality. On the other hand, we associate with the *truth, apprehended and believed*, all the interests and hopes of ourselves and our fellow-men for time and for eternity.

We can tolerate humanity, under whatever odious or offensive form it may disguise itself. We can be so tolerant as to accord, in ample measure, sincere and upright motives to men, even in the espousal of error. But to disregard the heaven-wide distinction between truth and falsehood, to fill up the eternal chasm between virtue and vice, this we never can, by heaven's help—this we never will do. Let it ever be remembered, that true Christian tolerance, as between man and man, regards *persons* and not *principles*—it regards *motives* and not *opinions*. And in what we bear and what we oppose, in what we would tolerate and what we would extirpate, we are to be directed as well by the Savior's example as by his precept in the text, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Having thus defined and illustrated what I conceive to be the true idea of Christian tolerance, allow me here to propose, brethren, a *test* by which you may try your claim to this virtue. Suppose that in the exercise of your free powers and undoubted rights, you have entered upon a course of conduct which, in your judgment, was right and proper, with good and worthy motives; but it has so happened, in the system of social liabilities under which



we live, that your conduct has been censured, your motives have been impugned, and your character and person unworthily treated. This, every one will see, is a conspicuous exhibition of intolerance. Now the test which I propose to each of you is, *can you tolerate this intolerance?* Can you, in kindness, *bear* with your fellow-man who is injuring you? And while you present the truth to him without reserve, can you treat him as a *man*, and feel that his motives, even while wronging you, may not be unmingled evil? Instead of hating and striving with your persecutor, can you love and pity him? If so, then, beyond all doubt, you are tolerant, and I well know that you have caught that spirit at the foot of His cross, who, when hanging thereon, prayed for His enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But if you have not attained unto this spirit and power of self-control, let me invite you to seek it at once of Him who is meek and lowly, and who proffers it to your acceptance.

II. We will now consider some reasons why men should exercise the virtue of tolerance. Of those that might be adduced for this purpose, I will suggest but two or three. And—

1. *The soul of every man demands that he be tolerant.* This is necessary to his true welfare. Tolerance cannot be intermitted but to his injury. You are aware of that law of projectile forces, by which, in the firing of a cannon, for instance, the recoil against the back of a gun is equal to the power that propels the ball forward through the air to its destined object. There is just such a law of moral projectiles; and every intolerant act (which is more like a cannon ball than like any other conceivable thing), not only produces evil, by shattering wherever it goes, but inflicts its recoil upon the man from whom it originates. Against this his nature cries out; this he cannot with safety endure.

We have been created in the image of God, endowed with reason and understanding, that we may appreciate the beings and objects around us; gifted with susceptibilities, that our hearts may enkindle with generous emotion for our Creator and our brethren; endowed with executive energies, that we may accomplish benevolent results for God's glory and the welfare of our race. And how can we look upon our fellow-men, rich in the possession of a common origin and nature with ourselves, unreasonably and in disparagement of their worth, and not injure our minds? Can we shut up our hearts to them, as the objects of our sympathies, and not harden our sensibilities? Can we withhold the outgoings of our energy from promoting their happiness, and not enfeeble and wither our powers? Believe me, we cannot. The outrage we should thus commit upon the throne of God and upon our brethren, is in no wise greater than the assault we should make upon our own souls.

The intolerant man *must* be an unhappy man; there is an obliquity and dimness in his vision that deceive him. Wherever he

goes he sees deformities; traits that should command his interest, lie hidden; men worthy of his love, become objects of his aversion; his heart becomes cold and gloomy; he is unhappy. Under the laws of our moral being, as established by the Almighty, this is the inevitable result. Have we not all sufficient experience on this point to be able to testify that it is so?

Look now at the tolerant man. He passes among the lights and shadows of life with an eye open to all that is good and lovely around him. Error and vice thrust themselves upon his view; they excite his aversion and regret, and he endeavors to suppress them. He is assaulted, perhaps misrepresented and abused; but, like his Master, he remembers that it is *with men*, and in *behalf of humanity*, that he is acting. He is forbearing, charitable, and kind, and he continues in effort still in behalf of his fellow-men, and in determined opposition to every evil. This course, we affirm, cannot fail to promote the welfare and happiness of his soul. It opens to him every object of generous thought, and sympathy, and high devotion. Above all, it brings him into fellowship with that forbearing, self-sacrificing spirit, manifested in the life and death of Jesus, which is the source of all our happiness. O, how little does the intolerant man understand what he does, when, in the exercise of this narrow spirit, he shuts himself out from the sweet symphonies of the human soul! casts off sympathy with the surpassing glories of nature and redemption, and locks up the divinity within him to his own contracted and confined feelings and views! Must not that divinity require enlargement and liberty? Does not the soul, in its own behalf, demand that its possessor be tolerant?

2. The next reason which I offer for the practice of tolerance, is, that *the souls of our fellow-men demand it of us*. The possession of this virtue is not more necessary to our own welfare, than its exercise is befitting and appropriate to our fellow-men. However we may consider the beings among whom we are placed, they, like ourselves, are of celestial descent. Some of them may be debased, and apparently little worthy of regard; but, without exception, their faculties are noble, and their capabilities are far above their present circumstances. The soul of man, though depraved and feeble, is yet a mysterious, a mighty and noble thing. Among the meanest and most cowardly assemblages of men of which we can form any conception, have been some of the mobs that have disgraced this country. And yet, even such an assemblage may not be utterly dead to every generous sentiment. A fierce mob, a few years ago, destroyed the beautiful mansion of a gentleman residing in one of the chief cities of our country. As the infuriated crowd were breaking up costly sofas and chairs, tables and mirrors, after they had wantonly ruined the many pictures that adorned the mansion, we are told that a full length portrait of Washington was brought out and presented to them. One, who had destroyed many other pictures, was about to put his foot

through that; but the cry, "Save it, save it," arrested the kick. "Save it, save it," arose from the vast mob; and the portrait was passed from hand to hand, over the heads of all, and deposited in a church of God, safe from harm. Now these men could not be utterly lost to the feelings of patriotism, and to the fame of Washington, although they were deeply outraging the fundamental principles of both. A person may even descend to the lowest depths of infamy, and appear to others to be utterly abandoned and lost; yet still be a man, and, under the blessing of God, be reclaimed and saved.

In speaking of the Zenaida dove, M. Audubon, the naturalist, relates that a man, once a pirate, assured him that, while at a certain well, dug in the burning shelly sands of a well known key, the soft and melancholy cry of the doves awoke in his breast feelings which had long slumbered, and melted his heart to repentance. He said that, although associated with a band of the most desperate villains that ever annoyed the navigation of the Florida coast, he never left the place without increased fears of futurity. So deeply was he moved by the notes of any bird, and especially by those of a dove, that through these plaintive notes alone he was induced to forsake his vessel, and abandon his companions and his horrible occupation. After paying a parting visit to these wells, and listening once more to the cooings of the Zenaida dove, he poured out his soul in supplication for mercy, and once more became an honest man. He effected his escape amid difficulties and dangers, and now lives in peace in the midst of his friends.

Shall the soul, thus noble in its degradation, in the apparent obliteration of its humanity, thus susceptible of the highest impulses—shall the *human soul* be treated with intolerance? No, brethren, no! Let the response of every heart be, No! There is an appropriateness in the exercise of tolerance towards our fellow beings, and a wrong in withholding it, of which you will become more fully convinced as you become more deeply acquainted with the human spirit in its necessities, its wonderful capabilities, and its mysterious, though often degraded powers. In its errors and vices, its aberrations and guilt, you will find much, very much, to tolerate; but bear and forbear, with all long-suffering and kindness. Bear and forbear, that you may address it in accents that it can consent to hear. Bear and forbear, that you may prove God's voice and power to awaken and beautify, to purify and save his erring and unhappy, yet not forgotten children of the earth. Such tolerance the souls of your fellow-men imperatively demand of you.

Finally, *God requires men to be tolerant.* Each man, we have seen, rightfully demands and expects this immunity from others. The requirement of God is, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" thus adding to the other reasons for tolerance, that of his *authority* as the Supreme Sovereign and Law-giver.

It is God's purpose to reveal unto the rational universe His own perfections, as the highest good and the only satisfying portion of the soul. To accomplish this end, he has placed men under a government of law, and in the prevalence of sin, has provided redemption for them through the death of His Son. And now, with the authority of a Sovereign, as well as the kindness of a Father, he calls upon them to co-operate with him in this great work. As the Infinite Proprietor, he lays his claim upon them, to direct their utmost power to secure the desired end. He requires that we possess his own spirit, hating sin with the utmost abhorrence, yet bearing and suffering long with the sinner. He requires that we imitate the atoning Savior, filling up that which is left behind of his afflictions, and attaining unto the fellowship of his endurance and sufferings. He requires that we become identified with his mediatorial plan and efforts, that we co-operate with his Spirit, exhibit his truth, and as far as in us lies, give effect to his recovering instrumentality and grace. How noble the calling! How weighty the responsibility and obligation resting upon those that are called!

Unto the largeness of this work the intolerant man can never attain. To its elevated spirit he can never reach; no, never. He cannot deeply sympathize with God in his purposes and ends; he cannot deeply sympathize with the plan of redemption through a crucified Savior; he cannot sympathize with the deep woes of the human soul; he is shut out from the vital, animating spirit of God's reign over this fallen world. Brethren, if we would accomplish the high end of our being, and display the glories of the ever blessed God, we must obey his voice, put away this alien spirit, and exhibit the spirit of Christian forbearance and love.

Such are some of the reasons for the exercise of this kindly virtue. From the inmost recesses of our hearts, from the souls of our fellow men, and from the infinite mind of God, voices issue forth, calling unto us, and urging upon us, to secure and constantly exercise the feelings of Christian forbearance and kindness. Deep calleth unto deep. All invite us into sweet accord and harmony with the spirit of God, the spirit of man, and the spirit of holy effort under the mediatorial King. Shall we listen to any other voice? Shall any other spirit have dominion over us?

My brethren, there is a great warfare going on in the world. This conflict must continue and extend. "Overturn and overturn," is the oracle that strikes upon our ear from the rapt strains of prophetic vision. Truth must overthrow error; virtue must supplant vice. In this great warfare, you are enlisted as combatants. Let it be ever remembered that you carry on not a *personal* conflict, but a conflict of *principle*; therefore, ever and fully tolerate the persons of your fellow-men; think favorably of their motives, even to your heart's utmost wish. But false principle and vice, by your allegiance to the truth, resist unto the death. Invite their extirpation in yourselves—show them no quarter in others.



Divide not your influence in this great conflict. Let your whole moral power, without subtraction and without intermission, be directed against error and sin. To this end, while zealous for the truth, be true to yourselves and to your God; in kindness and love tolerate your fellow-men. What things soever ye would that they should do to you, do ye even so to them.

#### LOOKING UP THERE, AND DOWN HERE.

THE celebrated Matthew Wilkes was once in company with a young clergyman, who was appointed to preach in the chapel formerly occupied by Whitefield. Having to look into the Bible in the pulpit for some purpose connected with the services, before the congregation were assembled, Mr. Wilkes discovered the young minister's notes between the leaves. "What! (said he) notes, where Whitefield preached? What! are you going to read a sermon from Whitefield's pulpit?" "Ah! (said the minister) the place is large, and is a new one for me, and I tremble at the thought of coming to the people without some written preparation." "Ah, well, well," said Mr. Wilkes, "it may be so; but remember, (and here he looked up to heaven, at the same time laying his hand upon the manuscript sermon on the desk) remember, the more you look up there, the less you'll find it necessary to look down here."

This was very striking. There is a great deal of heavenly meaning contained in this sentence of Mr. Wilkes. There is a great deal of instruction for every minister. "*The more you look up there, the less you will have to look down here.*" The more you look to God, the less will be your dependence on yourself, and on man. The more you look to God, the more independent you will be of yourself and of man. The more superior you will be to the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, and the more powerful you will be in yourself, by the grace of God within you. Look aloft! It is the only way to get safely down. Look aloft! Whether you have notes before you, or thoughts within you, or both, it is the only way to make them available, the only way to give them power over your hearers, the only way to speak them as from God, the only way to preach with comfort and happiness to yourself, with power and benefit to your hearers. Look up to God! It is the only way to make your hearers look thither also. If you see nothing but your manuscript, your hearers will not see much in that. And if you have not gotten your manuscript from God, your hearers will get little of God's thoughts from you. Your notes may have come from God's word, but if you yourself so not look up to God, the power of God's word will not be in them. A man needs as much help from God to preach a written sermon, as he does an extempore one; nay, perhaps more; for a

fluent extempore speaker may preach a torrent of mere words with some warmth to the hearer, if there be a fervent manner, when, if the torrent had been confined to a manuscript, it would have proved a very cold shower, or a mere damp drizzle. There is, indeed, too much of this drizzle in preaching.

Good thoughts in *notes* are apt to have more value, but they do not make so much *noise*, as light thoughts in *specie*. Your hearers themselves must be in the habit of going to the bank to prove your notes, and then they will find out their value. If you got them at the bank of heaven, your hearers will find that they are of more value than extempore silver. If you only made them yourself, they will be worth nothing at all. A handful of extempore sixpences, procured at the mint, will be better than hundreds of pounds signed only by yourself on paper. But if you did get your notes at the bank, your hearers will know it, even while you are issuing them; there being always an indefinable demonstration in the air and manner of the man who, as Matthew Wilkes says, "*looks up there*," that makes his hearers feel and say involuntarily, He got that note at the bank; it has the stamp of heaven's chancery. But heavy notes need more feeling in their issue, in their delivery, than light extempore sixpences. You may make much jingle with the latter, and this will pass with many for fervor, but with the former, unless you have the fervor which is obtained only by "*looking up there*," you will make but little impression on others, and even the notes which you get from the word of God will make but little impression on yourself.

The Word of God needs the Spirit of God, and while the word of God may be studied *in the letter*, and preached *in the letter*, merely by "*looking down here*," the Spirit of God can be obtained only by "*looking up there*." It is only the preacher, who *looks up there*, that knows how to *look down here* aright. The same may be said of all Christians, of hearers as well as preachers: Matthew Wilkes' word is as good for one as the other. The more you look to God, the less you will find it necessary to look to man. The more you look to God, the better you will know how to look to his word, and the more you will see of him in it. And as to notes in the pulpit, the more you are in the habit of looking up to God before you go to church, the more you will see of God in the preacher, and the more you will receive from God through him; if indeed he himself is more in the habit of looking up there, than down here. And if not, you will know it. But whether the preacher looks up to God or not, it is none the less your duty to do so. And it ought to be remembered that the more you look up there, the more he will look up there also. The way a church looks has a great influence on the way a minister looks. Wherefore, let all look up to God.—*Dr. Cheever.*